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To assess current problems and achievements in education and to project directions for school administration beyond 1970, the AASA appointed a Commission to study the preparation of professional school administrators. This report is designed to provide background for the work of this Commission. The 1960's have seen teacher walkouts, use of armed forces to maintain public order in cities, unrest over the war in Vietnam, and student unrest. On the other hand, notable achievements were made in educational quality, quantity, and innovations. Also, advances in preservice and, to a lesser extent, inservice preparation for school administrators were made, but more advances are needed. The active practice of school administration changed, especially in areas of employee organizations, minority group unrest, demands for economy, social conflict in cities, and school control. Such developments raise questions as to the focus of the Commission's study. The most likely areas for the concern of the Commission are, therefore, strategies for managing change, theories of system organization and structure, information systems, master plans for program evaluation, new technologies for managing school operations, and comprehensive planning as a basis for resource allocation. (HW)

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THE AASA COMMISSION ON PREPARATION OF PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

by Edward L. Whigham, Supt., Dade Co. Schools

A Report to the AASA, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Sunday, February 16, 1969, 2:30 p.m.

In 1960, almost a decade ago, the American Association of School Administrators published its yearbook titled, Professional Administrators for America's Schools. This was the thirty-eighth and final yearbook in an AASA series which began in 1923.

That 1960 Yearbook was prepared by a committee of AASA members appointed in 1958 and given this informal charge: "Do a wrap-up job on school administration during the 1950's and point the way for the profession in the next few years."

In carrying out its task, the 1958 Commission provided AASA members and educators generally with a comprehensive statement on professional preparation programs for school administration and a profile of American school superintendents. The Commission also presented policy and program recommendations for school administration in the 1960's.

A New AASA Commission

Now, as the decade of the Sixties comes to a close, it is time to look at that period and see what actually happened in professional school administration. There is need to assess current problems and achievements in education and to project directions for school administration in the years beyond 1970.

For that purpose, AASA has appointed a second Commission on preparation for professional school administration. This Commission, which is responsible for the program for this session, is composed of four superintendents,

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four university professors, and an AASA associate secretary. It is just beginning its work, having held only one meeting prior to the session today.

Purpose of Today's Meeting

Our purpose in holding this open meeting is to explore further the assignment of the Commission by securing your thoughts on the significant issues which should be considered. The statements of panel members and responses from the audience will provide directions for the work of the Commission.

The panel which is before you includes two Commission members and two panelists who are not members.

The Social and Educational Setting for School Administration

The program title for this session is "Preparation of School Administrators in the Exciting Sixties." Well, one thing is without doubt--the Sixties were certainly exciting as far as school administration was concerned. Indeed, "exciting" seems too casual a description for events of those years.

This was the period of such developments as school closings across the nation because of teacher walkouts; the use of armed force to maintain public order in many cities, including the nation's capital; widespread public unrest over the war in Vietnam; and disturbances, sometimes violent, on the campuses of colleges and universities.

In the 1960's many young people openly questioned the institutions, public policies, and social foundations of Western Civilization.

Compare that youthful activism with public statements in the 1950's charging school and college students with social apathy and excessive concern for material values and personal security.

Despite its problems, education in the 1960's evidenced some significant achievements. The quality and quantity of school graduates demonstrates that strong educational improvements were being made. Curriculum content in many schools was strengthened; and instructional practices were extensively studied, both in design and supporting technology. Self-instruction, modular scheduling, facilities with large open spaces for cooperative team efforts, electronic aids, and the like were in the order of the day. Sheer ability to maintain educational institutions intact in the face of strong public tensions and serious social conflicts indicated that school administration was not entirely on the deficit side.

Despite such achievements, as the end of this decade approaches persistent questions are raised about the quality of education and about the effectiveness of present administrative practices and structures.

The Focus of Commission Study

The pace and pervasiveness of technological, scientific, cultural, and educational change seem certain to continue in the years ahead. In the face of mounting public concern about the administration of schools, this question should be posed: Is there need for the American Association of School Administrators to address the citizens of the nation concerning the quality of resources available and needed for administering the schools

of this country? Should the results of this Commission's work be addressed to members of the profession or to the public at large?

Such questions indicate a concern among Commission members about the focus for Commission study.

Some members also think that primary attention should be directed to the administration of urban education. In view of current problems in urban systems and the sizeable proportion of American children and youth attending school in those systems, perhaps attention should be focused on urban and metropolitan areas.

Likewise, is there need to focus largely on system administration and the superintendency, rather than other levels of administration or the superintendent alone? Administrative leadership at the system level today requires a team approach based on specialized competencies exerted within the framework of a broad understanding of the purposes, programs, interrelationships, and environmental forces of the school system. There is a noticeable growth in differentiation and specialization among the various staff positions in school system administration. Leadership positions requiring preparation outside the field of education are added to school system staffs with increasing frequency. The competitive market which must be faced in securing staff members with those specialized competencies is indicative of the shortage of such personnel.

A final question on focus concerns the need for looking at educational administration in state and federal departments of education, in colleges and universities, and in professional organizations in education. Such agencies and institutions are significant consumers of administrative manpower in education; and the quality of administration there is, or should be, of vital concern to the nation.

Preservice Preparation for School Administrators

Turning now to the area of preservice education, it should be noted that a major accomplishment of the 1958 Commission was a survey of preparation programs in colleges and universities. It is anticipated that the present Commission will have similar studies prepared.

Until those studies are completed, it is only possible to note trends and concerns which were in evidence in the 1960's.

There was considerable concern about the quality of personnel admitted to graduate programs in educational administration. While the numbers admitted were apparently sufficient, research indicated that, compared with other fields of university study, the academic competency of graduate students in school administration was not favorable. Efforts were made to improve selection procedures, not only in respect to quality of academic performance but also in regard to predicted ability to perform administrative responsibilities. Financial support to assist graduate students increased in the Sixties, but additional funds for this purpose are needed.

Program design in preservice education tended to move away from classroom-bound courses based on administrative tasks performed in practice toward emphasis on administrative theory, research study of administration, and utilization of concepts from other fields, particularly the social sciences, and preparation programs in fields such as business administration. The residency requirement for graduate degree programs was being increased, and the internship became a basic part of preparation in more university programs.

Instructional methods tended to change from a textbook-lecture approach toward use of case studies, simulation models, field experiences, laboratory training in human relations, and conceptual analysis of administrative problems.

The need for post-doctoral programs was often mentioned, particularly since most graduate programs are for general administration rather than specifically for the superintendency or the university professorship in educational administration.

The need for almost all the program developments just mentioned was noted in the report of the 1958 Commission. The extent to which such changes are occurring in the more than two hundred colleges and universities preparing school administrators is uncertain. Quality of programs vary widely among those institutions, and it is probable that talk of new directions considerably exceeds actual implementation of program changes in many institutions.

To the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, which existed before 1960, there was added in the 1960's, as an outgrowth of the Kellogg Programs in the previous decade, the University Council for Educational Administration. These two organizations along with the AASA and the National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education form the professional base for national attention to the preparation of professional school administrators. Among the concerns about preservice programs emerging from their various deliberations are these: the need for better evaluation of preservice programs; the need for increased financial support to provide the resources and research essential for quality programs; the proper placement within

university academic organization of preparation programs for school administration; and the need to increase the range of staff specialists on university faculties in school administration. Recognized also were the desirability of inservice education for professors of educational administration and the need for renewal of effective relationships between university staffs and school administrators in the field.

Inservice Education for School Administrators

Closely related to preservice programs is continued education for administrators on the job. The forces of change sweeping across school systems in the 1960's would seem to provide a compelling basis for inservice education.

Some change in the content of inservice activities during the decade is indicated by the topics which appeared on the agenda for conferences and other inservice programs for administrators. One notes frequently such topics as the management of employee relationships, the improvement of school-community relationships, the automation of information processing by computers and allied electronic technologies, and the problems and techniques of school desegregation.

Content may have been changing somewhat; but with two notable exceptions, the resources for inservice education remained largely the same. Professional organizations, universities, and state departments continued to be the primary sources of inservice programs. The techniques used and the resources applied, however, were largely traditional.

An exception to that pattern, though with yet to be determined impact, was provided by two actions of AASA. In 1964 the AASA membership requirement of two years of graduate study in administration was placed into effect;

and in the school year 1968-69 AASA inaugurated its National Academy for School Executives.

The second exceptional development was the emergence of private enterprise into an active role in administrative inservice education. A number of private management firms, often as a result of consultant services to school systems, began active programs of commercially based inservice education. Other commercial firms as well as professional groups such as the American Management Association also were providing inservice experiences for educators.

Of all areas involved in the professionalization of school administration, the area which needs the most searching inquiry probably is inservice development. Despite the call of the 1958 Commission for "disciplined inservice education of the school administrator", this area of professionalization is still inadequately understood through systematic study and poorly developed in effective programs of action.

The Practice of School Administration

In contrast to developments in inservice education, the active practice of school administration was subjected to strong and bewildering changes in the 1960's.

In those years, school administrators continued to face the old problems of insufficient funds, rising enrollments, increasing costs, changing curricula, and inadequate supply of well qualified personnel. In addition to those persistent problems, however, school administration faced new sets of problems which taxed administrative resources in a stern manner.

Organizations of school employees demanded structured roles in school policy making. Minority groups demanded equal educational opportunity,

integration of administrative and other staffs, and a voice in the control of schools. While some public groups demanded greater economy in school operations, others sought and secured expansion in the program and services of schools.

The growing intensity of unresolved social conflict in many cities during this decade foreshadowed a serious disruption of school operations in urban systems--a disruption which in fact is occurring in some systems as the decade comes to a close.

During the 1960's, proposals were advanced for total support of education from the state level; for unification of urban and suburban school systems to reduce social and economic inbalances within metropolitan areas; and for decentralization of large school systems to achieve what is said to be better community control of education.

In face of such demands, conflicts, and proposals, there is a notable increase in action by lay citizens in policy control of schools to turn toward private business and industry for direction and assistance in the management of education. That role is apparently welcomed by leaders in business and industry because of the sales potential of school markets, their genuine concern about the educational welfare of the nation, and their conviction that private enterprise has the "know-how" that can appreciably raise the efficiency level of school operations.

Improvements which practicing administrators may have achieved in school management, programs and operations in the 1960's were largely obscured by the pressures which came from many sides. Faced with those pressures, the school superintendency in the 1960's became one of the most demanding and difficult positions in American public life. In many situations, especially

in urban areas, school system administration seemed to be an almost impossible job. The personal ideals and values of school superintendents, the goals commonly accepted by those with acknowledged professional status, and the competencies acquired through professional preparation and experience were severely tested--to say nothing of the impact on their personal lives.

There is a need for a realistic assessment of the conflicting forces now acting on public school system administration and a determination of steps needed to make positions at the system level attractive and productive. What properly informed observer can any longer say, as simply as did a major educational policy group in 1965, that, "A competent superintendent in a community which approaches education with the social well-being in mind, can therefore enjoy the challenges of his work." Furthermore, the sharply increasing salaries for public school administration in the 1960's may not produce the results expected.

The survey of the 1958 Commission and the subsequent 1964 study by AASA exploded the public stereotypes about the complete lack of academic education and other qualifications among professional school superintendents. It would seem that contemporary professional administrators are no less well prepared and possibly may be better prepared. It is cause for concern then, when one encounters among many administrators a growing concern, vague though it may be, that something is wrong today in the basic concepts and structure of roles and responsibilities in school system administration.

Furthermore, one cannot fail to note that too many school systems seem to proceed largely on a crisis basis in administration. The internal and external pressures facing systems, the magnitude of operations in large

systems, and the competency, or lack thereof, of administrative staffs do not wholly account for the crisis atmosphere which surrounds administrative leadership and actions.

Is it possible that the profession of school administration lacks an adequate and broad management grasp of the nature of its responsibilities? Will, as indicated in a 1963 AASA statement, "new theories of school administration...rooted in the behavioral sciences" produce the concepts, directions, structures, and relationships which are needed?

In this connection, there is need to look more penetratingly at the activities and understandings of boards of education. Vacillation by board members in the making of school system policy and their lack of comprehension of the board's very important role in the school system structure may be partly a source of current administrative frustration. Some straightforward analysis and evaluation in this area by groups such as this Commission may be in order.

Worthy of Commission concern also is the gap which appears to have developed in communications and working relationships between administrators in the field and staffs of educational administration departments in colleges and universities. For whatever reasons, practicing administrators are turning with greater frequency to sources other than the university for understanding and assistance in meeting the practical problems of school administration.

The perspective of time and the results of careful study are needed to determine the significance of administrative concern about the adequacy of basic concepts and practices in school system administration today. It is not surprising though, that faced with the current pressures of field

operations, system administrators are at least frequently talking about such topics as the following: strategies for managing change; theories of system organization and structure; total information systems; master plans for program evaluation; new technologies for managing school operations; and comprehensive planning as a basis for resource allocation.

The Nature of School Administration

Out of the welter of developments in field administration and related preparation programs, there come an increase in questions and discussion about the nature of school administration. Those concerns involve the purposes of school administration, the roles and responsibilities of administrative personnel, and the theories and practical strategies which are to undergird the organization and administration of education institutions in the years ahead.

Can the determination of the nature of school administration be approached only in a normative manner? Or is it possible to identify, delineate, and describe an objective process of school administration?

A basic understanding and frame of reference is needed to stabilize school administration in a setting that is strongly beset by the stress and strain of social change. Such basic understanding is essential also to an adequate assessment of preparation programs in the 1960's and to the projection of directions for the years which lie ahead.

The nature of school administration, then, may be a major topic for consideration by this Commission on the Preparation of Professional School Administrators.

Summary

Now, to conclude--my presentation this afternoon was designed to provide background to the work of this Commission and to explain the Commission's purpose in holding this open hearing. The purpose of the session will be completed as members of the panel and the audience provide reactions which point the direction for the Commission's efforts.

Let me summarize by posing several questions for your consideration:

To whom should this Commission address its report? Is there need for AASA to speak broadly to the American public concerning the vital importance of sound school system administration?

What should be the focus on the Commission's work? Should it be system administration, urban school systems and administration at the local school system level?

What are the outstanding qualities of current preparation programs and what improvements are needed?

What basic directions should be established for inservice education for professional administrators and how should these directions be developed?

How can the agencies and institutions responsible for preparing educational administrators cooperate more effectively?

What basic problems and new directions are emerging in the administration of education? What kind of attention should be given to those in the forthcoming decade?

How can administrators in education, public and private, work with private enterprise and other sectors of American society in sound preparation of professional management personnel?

What are the significant social and educational issues now confronting school administration that are likely to be active issues in the decade of the 1970's. What new issues will appear?

What resources should this Commission use in its work?

And finally, a simple but loaded question--What is school administration?